



Paramedic Chiefs
of Canada

Chefs Paramédics
du Canada

Trauma Informed Investigative Approaches

In association with



This session will be recorded, and a link will be available on paramedicchiefs.ca/webinars



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In association with





Paramedic Chiefs
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Trauma Informed Approaches in Emergency Medical Service Organizations

Gabriele Mroz

MAL-H, ACP, AEMCA



Acknowledgments

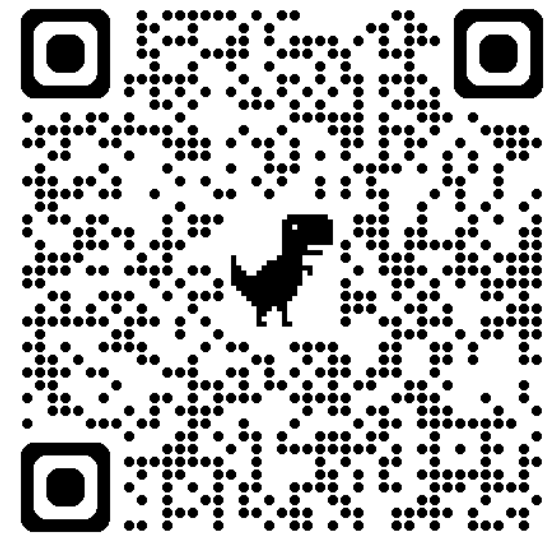


Preamble

We will be discussing trauma and trauma-informed practice, which can be sensitive and triggering for some.

To ensure a safe environment for all, please

- You are encouraged to care for yourself in the way that feels right—stepping out is always okay.
- To maintain a safe environment, please keep content non-graphic and avoid specific trauma details.
- Consider what supports you might need during or after this conversation and have them available.



A little about this work...



Front line Primary and Advanced Care Paramedic

Base Hospital – Clinical Care Investigations

Ministry of Health - Investigator

Land Ambulance Operator - Professional Standards

Paramedic SME Criminal and Civil Proceedings

Overview

- ✓ Let's talk about trauma
- ✓ Why do we need a trauma informed approach?
- ✓ What is a trauma-informed approach?
- ✓ Investigative integration



Overview

- ✓ **Let's talk about trauma**
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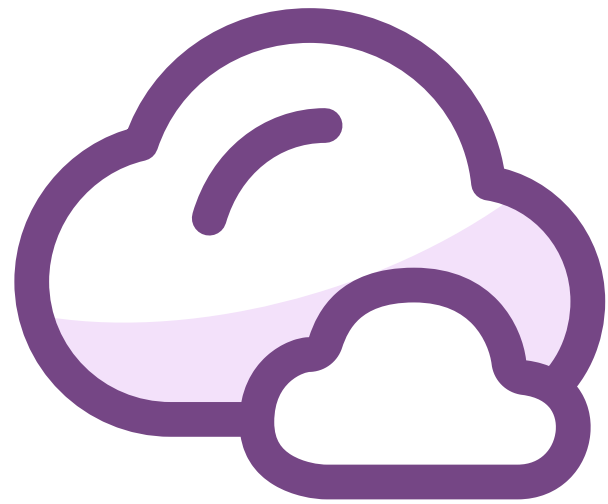


Let's Talk About Trauma

What is trauma?

Memory and trauma





When you hear the word trauma, what words or phrases comes to mind?

Let's Talk About Trauma

What is trauma?

The lasting emotional response that often results from living through a distressing event

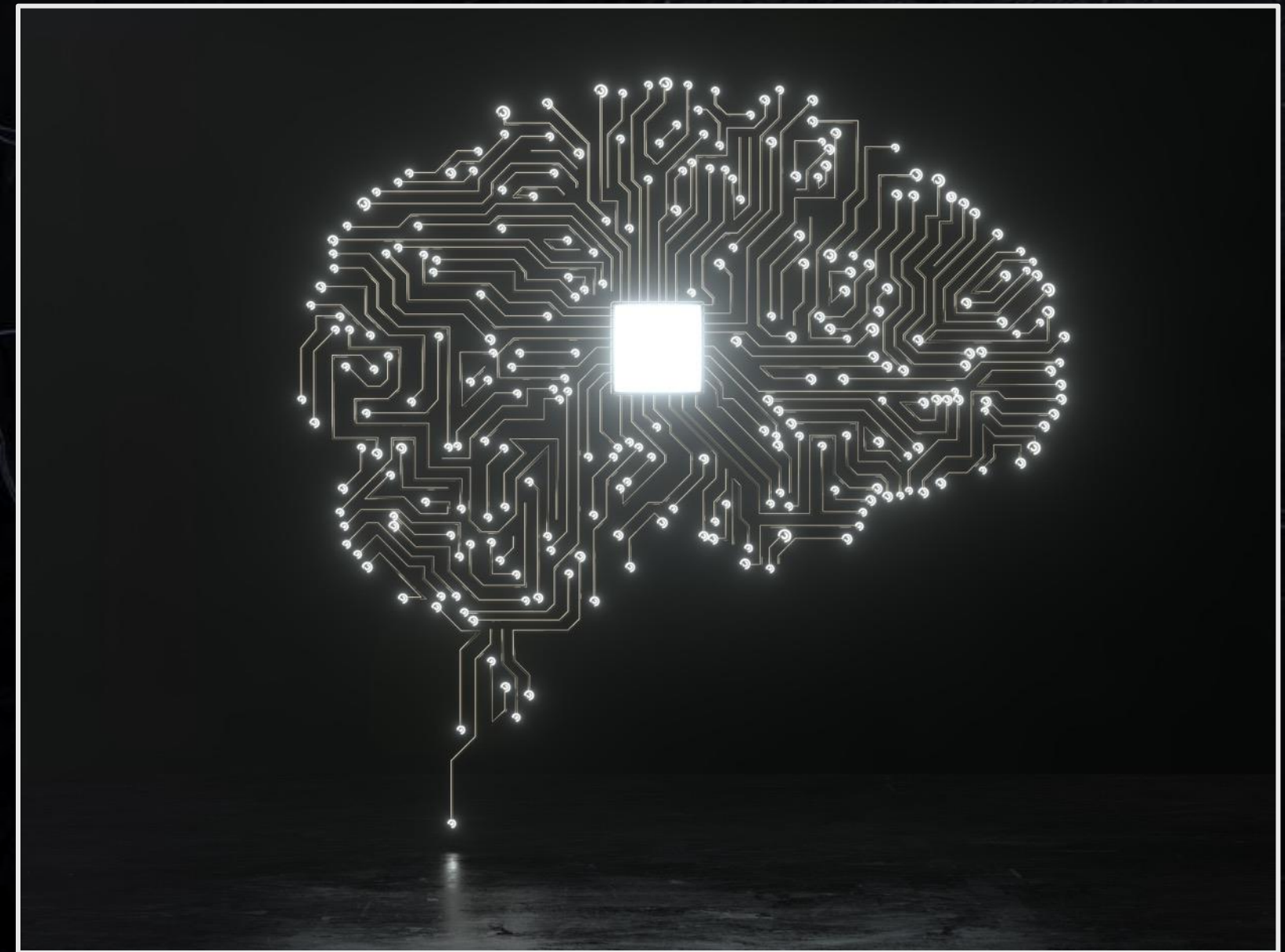
- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), 2024

Let's Talk About Trauma

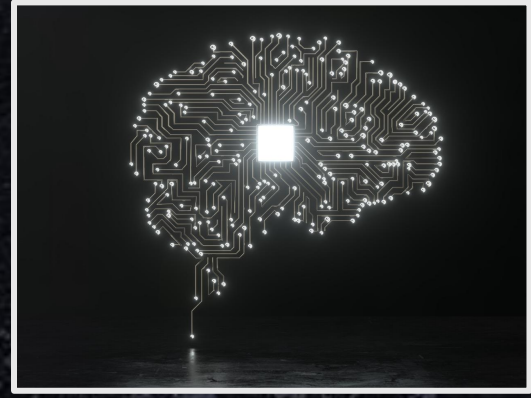
Memory and trauma

Protect from danger

- Trauma memories stored differently
- Impacts authority over memory



Let's Talk About Trauma

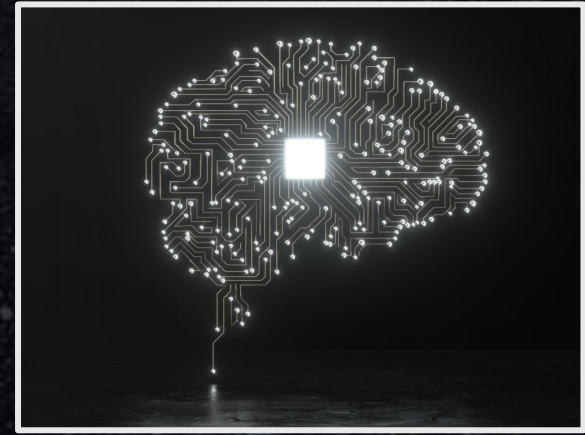


Memory and non-traumatic events

Hippocampus	Cortex	Amygdala
Encodes memories	Processing and reasoning	Emotional tagging
Beginning, middle, end	Integration	Integrated and retrievable
Chronological order		

Clear, chronological, retrievable memories

Let's Talk About Trauma



Memory and traumatic events

Hippocampus	Cortex	Amygdala
Suppression	Supressed	Becomes hyperactive
Chronological details <ul style="list-style-type: none">- missing- out of order- fragmented	Logic and reasoning <ul style="list-style-type: none">- offline	Emotional tagging <ul style="list-style-type: none">- stressful, overwhelmed, danger

Fragmented, sensory based, intrusive memories

Overview

- ✓ Let's talk about trauma
- ✓ **Why do we need a trauma informed approach?**
- ✓ What is a trauma-informed approach?
- ✓ Investigative integration



Why is a Trauma Informed Approach Needed?



1 in 4 Paramedics
screen positive for PTSD

Mausz et al., 2022

Paramedics face significantly higher rates of psychological injuries compared to allied healthcare providers

-Bentley et al., 2013

Increased instances of mental health concerns than fire and police personnel

- Harenberg et al., 2018

Why is a Trauma Informed Approach Needed?



Uncontrolled and highly stressful environments without immediate resources available

-Bentley et al., 2013

Fear of personal safety and repeated exposure to unfiltered trauma

-Bentley et al., 2013

Why is a Trauma Informed Approach Needed?



Paramedics work under unique conditions that make them especially vulnerable

-Awais et al., 2020

Why is a Trauma Informed Approach Needed?

Regulatory events are the **second leading cause** of triggering trauma and CIS among first responders.

- Regehr, 2003

Bill 163 c
Supporting Ontario's First Responders Act,
2016



Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario

Overview

- ✓ Let's talk about trauma
- ✓ Why do we need a trauma informed approach?
- ✓ **What is a trauma-informed approach?**
- ✓ Investigative integration



What is a Trauma Informed Approach?



Trauma-Informed Approach

Offers an appreciation of the underlying emotional responses formed by personal and professional experiences, both overt and covert

-Sherman, 2021

Elements of Trauma Informed Practice



Safety

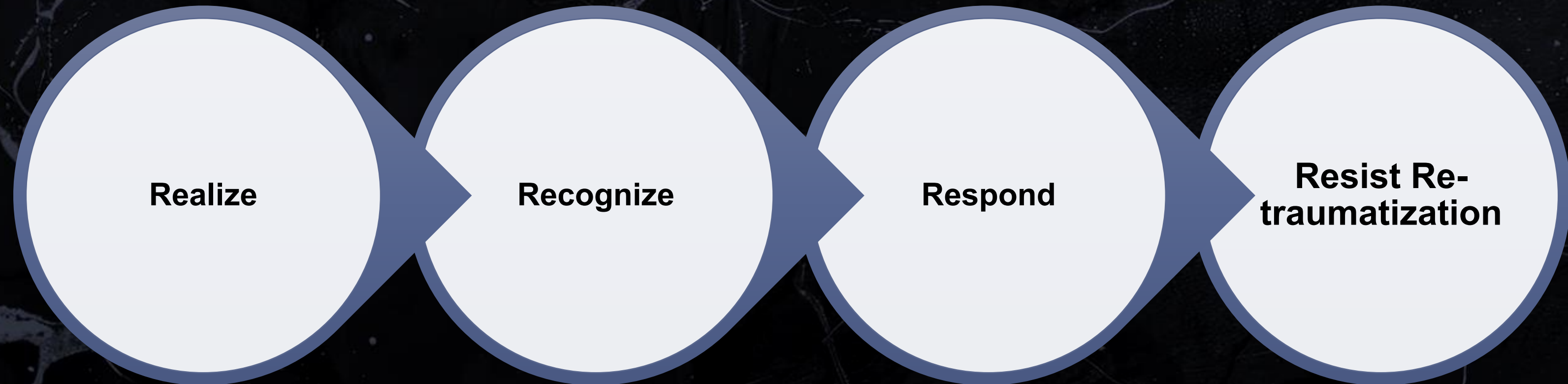


Connection

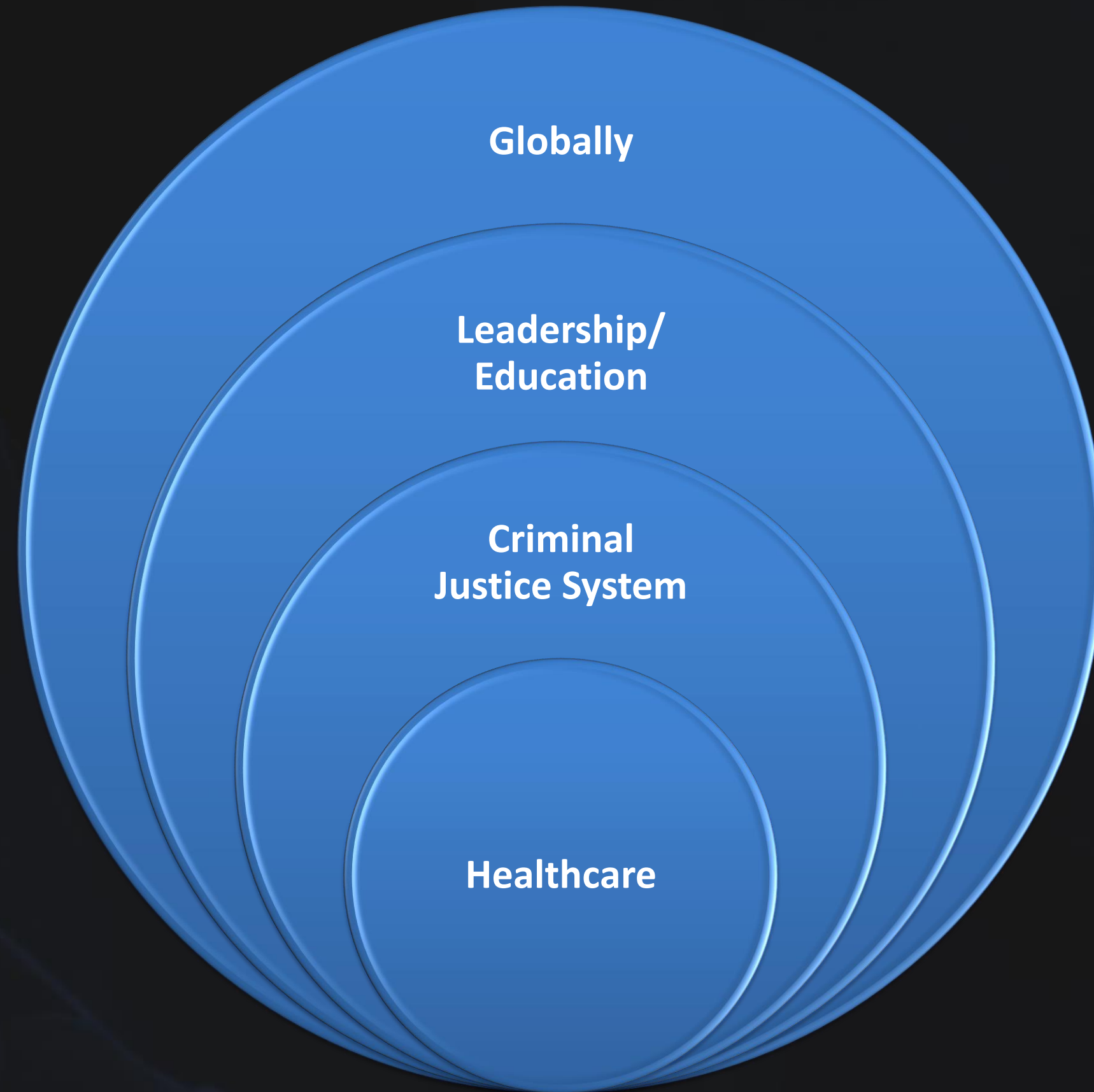


Trust

What Does a Trauma Informed Approach Look Like?



Origins



Overview

- ✓ Let's talk about trauma
- ✓ Why do we need a trauma informed approach?
- ✓ What is a trauma-informed approach?
- ✓ **Investigative integration**



Integration



**What is your
goal as an
investigator?**



Investigative Elements



Safety



Connection



Trust

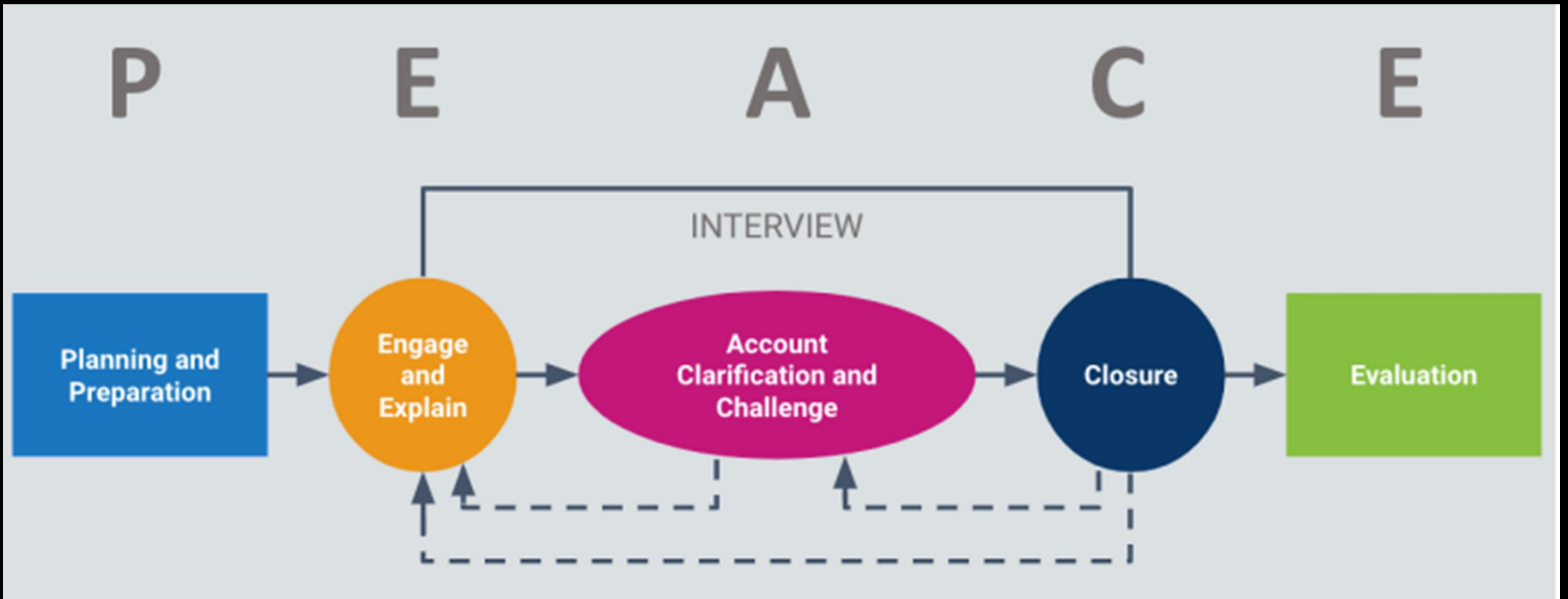
**PEACE Model with
Trauma Informed
Adaptive Approaches**

TRAUMA INFORMED
INVESTIGATIVE
APPROACHES IN
EMERGENCY MEDICAL
SERVICE
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PEACE Model with
Trauma Informed Adaptive
Approaches

Gabriele Mroz MAL-H, ACP, AEMCA

PEACE Model with Trauma Informed Adaptations



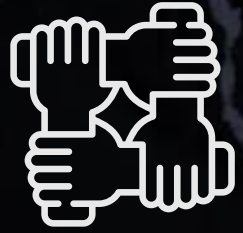
Planning and Preparation



- Documents that outline a transparent and consistent investigation process
- Standardized notification practices
- Sharing information where able to ease the stress that comes with the uncertainty of investigations
- **Challenge:** Bias check



Engage and Explain



- Providing support options pre, during, and post interview
- Use of accessible formats
- Showing concern for the interviewee's situation
- Using similar language
- Mimicking and using open body language
- Active listening
- Establishing common ground through shared experiences
- Show kindness, respect and patience
- **Challenge:** create an agenda !



Account, Clarify & Challenge



- Allow the interviewee to provide an uninterrupted version of events
- Interviewer is actively listening and recognizing potential trauma
- Ask the difficult questions
- **Challenge:** think back and reflect



Trauma Recognition



**How do you know when
someone is deceitful ???**

Trauma Recognition



Dan Sun, n.d., *Office Politics*

	Trauma Responses	Indicators of Deception
Physical	Sweating Muscle tremors Uncontrollable shaking	Sweating Muscle tremors Increased redness
	Elevated blood pressure Elevated heart rate Elevated resp rate	Elevated blood pressure Elevated heart rate
	Greater startle responses Hyperarousal Depersonalization	Eye blinking Gaze aversion Moving focus from interviewer

Trauma Recognition



	Trauma Responses	Indicators of Deception
Cognitive	Distortion of time and recollection of details surrounding traumatic events	Frequent admission to lack of memory
	Lack of sequencing when attempting to retrieve or recall events	Difficulty retelling a story backwards due to increased cognitive load
	Conscious and unconscious avoidance of memory recollection	Lacks details of events

Trauma Recognition



Verbal/Behavioural

Trauma Responses

Avoidance of event reminders

Difficulty expressing ones self

Indicators of Deception

Avoidance of questions

Slower speech patterns
Repeated words
Stuttering
Generally shorter/ carefully phrased responses
Offer fewer details than with genuine recollections

Trauma Recognition



	Trauma Responses	Indicators of Deception
Emotional	<p>Withdrawal and apathy Emotionally void or detached</p> <p>Avoidant/ argumentative behaviour Fragility Anger Shame Irritability</p>	<p>Flat disposition as a deceitful person lacks involvement in their claims</p>

Trauma Response

- Take a break
- Allow the individual to engage with their support person
- Asking open-ended questions
- Avoid sequentially based questions
- Avoid interruptions
- Provide supports as appropriate – enlist others to provide support
- Note it in the report !



Closure



- Shared understanding of the information provided
- Ability of the interviewee to add any additional information
- Explanation of next steps
- Reiterate employee supports
- Express gratitude
- Timely closure of investigative events
- **Challenge:** send a closure email !



Evaluate

Debriefing opportunities with investigative team

- Did we apply a trauma informed lens to this case?
- Are we making assumptions?
- Do we have engrained bias showing up in this investigation?
- How can we incorporate trauma informed processes in future cases?
- What are the opportunities for positive change in future investigations?
- **Challenge:** Develop a self evaluation tool !



Misconceptions



TRUE



FALSE

A shield for accountability

Only for those diagnosed with a mental health concern

The event wasn't "traumatic enough"

A "soft" approach

A free pass

Expectation to treat

Negative Outcomes



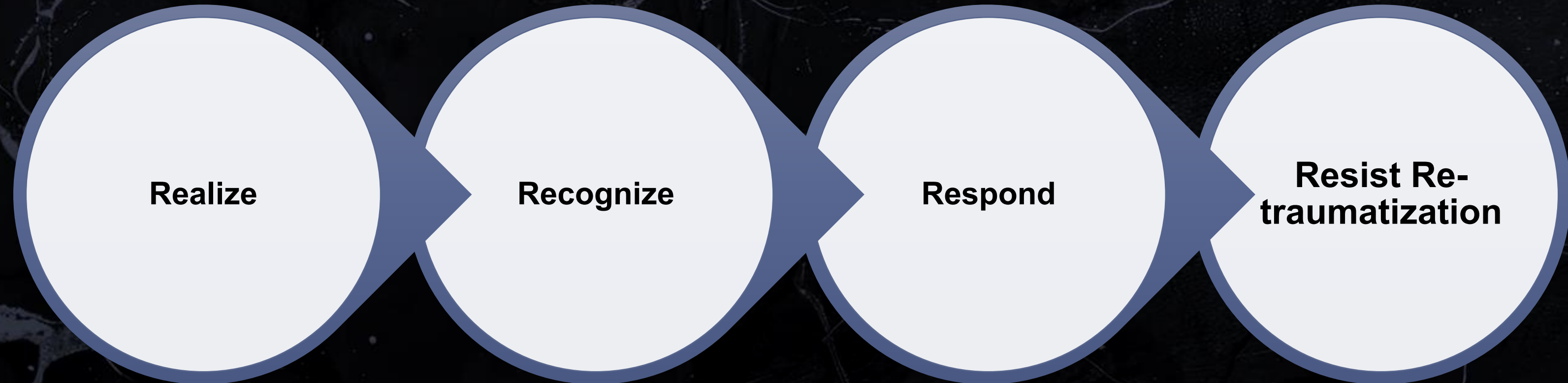
Re-traumatizing which may result in absence from the workplace

Erosion of trust

Reputation risk

Investigation integrity and outcomes

Remember This?



Thank you

PARAMEDIC

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**A special thank you to
Daniel Sundahl of
DanSun Photo Art for the
gracious use of his
powerful art in this
presentation**



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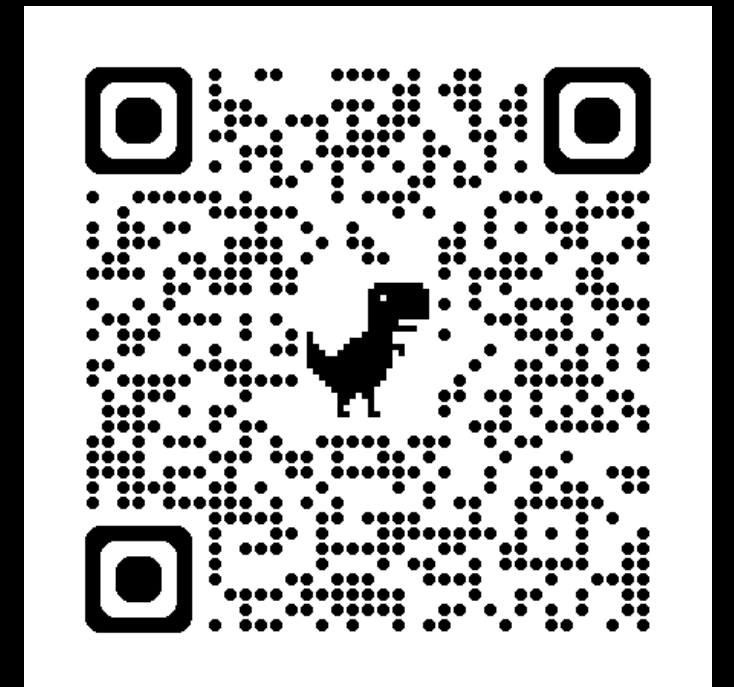
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Thank You for Joining Us!

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